



Department of Justice

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TWO MORE INDICTED, TWO MORE PLEAD GUILTY
IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today that a federal grand jury returned indictments against two more Louisiana residents on federal FEMA fraud charges, and that two more Louisiana residents pled guilty in federal court to violations related to Hurricane Katrina relief funds.

KIM M. CUMMINGS, age 38, and DORETHA S. FRANCIS, age 35, residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were each charged in two-count indictments with making a false and fraudulent claim for disaster assistance benefits and with making false and fraudulent statements to FEMA. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General. If convicted, CUMMINGS and FRANCIS face maximum sentences of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine per count.

These individuals bring the total number of defendants who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to Hurricane Katrina relief funds to sixty-one.

VINITA LANE, age 28, and MICHELLE LONDON, age 31, residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, each pled guilty today before District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola to Count One of indictments charging each with making a false and fraudulent claim for disaster relief benefits. As a result of their guilty pleas to Count One of the indictments, LANE and LONDON each face maximum sentences of five (5) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. As part of the plea agreements, the U.S. Attorney's Office will dismiss Count Two of the indictments when LANE and LONDON are sentenced on Count One.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office, and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, among others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443.

NOTE: An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendants. The defendants, of course, are presumed innocent until and unless he or she is proven guilty at trial.

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